

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

100304Z Aug 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 006407

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA WITHDRAWAL - WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR JORDAN

REF: A. AMMAN 05918

[B](#). AMMAN 05737

[C](#). AMMAN 05230

[D](#). AMMAN 05065

Classified By: CDA DAVID HALE. REASON 1.4 (B)

[1](#)1. (C) Senior Jordanian officials continue to do their part to promote a smooth Gaza withdrawal. In statements following his meetings with Abu Mazen, Quartet envoy Wolfensohn, and Israeli Defense Minister Mofaz, the King stressed the importance of supporting Abu Mazen to consolidate control of Gaza, and of strong Israeli-Palestinian coordination. Prime Minister Badran has repeated Jordan's offer to train Palestinian security elements. In public and in private, Jordanian officials also express hope that a successful Gaza withdrawal will lead to future progress in the West Bank, and to a two-state solution. They hold this view because of the way final status issues impact and distort Jordan's internal political dynamic, among a population that is over 60 percent Palestinian by origin.

[1](#)2. (C) There is pessimism and skepticism here inside government, and even more outside. We often hear the withdrawal plan dismissed, by both East and West Bankers, as a scheme to "turn Gaza into the world's biggest prison." Many columnists here predict chaos will surround Gaza withdrawal, and that the Israeli government will use any disorder as a pretext to halt further progress toward a two-state solution. Several members of parliament have told poloff that while they would like to hope for the best, they are "expecting the worst": a pullout surrounded by violence and Israeli actions against Palestinians. In this context, Jordanian opinion leaders have welcomed senior USG statements on the need for continued progress after Gaza.

Gaza's Link to Reform in Jordan

[1](#)3. (C) This all factors into the struggle between Jordanian reformers and traditionalists because the reform debate is entwined with the tensions between Jordanian-Palestinians and the ascendant East Banker minority. If reformers here can credibly point to a successful Gaza withdrawal as a step toward a two-state solution, the advocates of political and economic liberalization will be better insulated from charges that their reforms would hand power to the Palestinian majority. However, in the event developments in Gaza are perceived here as further delaying the establishment of a real Palestinian state, East Bank traditionalists will dig in further, convinced that they need to maintain their grip on power if Jordan itself is to avoid becoming, by default, the Palestinian state. Radical Islamists, too, would likely find a more responsive audience among Jordan's Palestinian majority.

The Next Step: Royal Commission Reports

[1](#)4. (C) The next steps for reform in Jordan will be the release of the reports of two royal commissions ) one on "the national agenda," the other on implementation of the King's plan to devolve some power to three new regional governments (ref C). Originally slated for early September, before the King's visit to the U.S., we are now hearing that the reports may not be finalized by then. Any recommendations in the reports for political changes that might empower Jordanian-Palestinians will be loudly opposed in the anti-reform chamber of deputies, which is feeling its oats after forcing the government to sack several ministers who were seen as too reformist (and too Palestinian.) A post-Gaza stalemate would likely make East Bank parliamentarians even more recalcitrant.

[1](#)5. (C) With so much at stake inside Jordan, we expect the GOJ to continue to highlight publicly its efforts to support a successful disengagement. King Abdullah will also keep Israeli-Palestinian issues at the top of his agenda when he visits the U.S. in September.

HALE